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ABSTRACT

This practicum was implemented to improve the rehabilitation planning skills of social workers in a juvenile correctional facility. The goal was to increase social workers' discussion of all relevant rehabilitation planning data during multi-disciplinary team meetings (Case Review Committee). A related objective was the overall improvement of rehabilitation services. The program director of the institution requested that the supervisors of the social workers record their subordinates' performance at each Case Review Committee meeting. The supervisors (cottage managers) were requested to record the percentage of required documents brought to the meetings by the social workers and the percentage of documents discussed. The cottage managers provided verbal feedback immediately following each social worker presentation. In addition, the weekly results were publicly posted in the Program Department office on a graph representing individual performance. The results indicated that a substantial improvement in social worker performance had occurred. All social workers demonstrated improvement in the number of required documents brought to the meeting and their discussion of each. Anecdotal reports by other staff and independent evaluators corroborated the improved rehabilitation services. (Author/ABL)

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PRACTICUM REPORT

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Center for the
Advancement of Education
Ed.D. Program

Improving the Performance of Social Workers During Multi-Disciplinary Team Case Reviews of Delinquent Adolescents Through Public Posting and Verbal Feedback

by

Vincent J. Carbone

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NOVA UNIVERSITY

Improving the Performance of Social Workers During Multi-Disciplinary Team Case Reviews of Delinquent Adolescents Through Public Posting and Verbal Feedback

by

Vincent J. Carbone

Cluster XXX

A Practicum (I) Report Presented to the
Ed. D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1990

PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier: Judith Hill 3/30/90
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3/30/90
Date

This practicum report was submitted by Vincent J. Carbone under the direction of the advisor listed below. It was submitted to the ED. D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

Date of Final Approval of Report

JoEllen Rogers, Ph.D., Advisor

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This writer would like to recognize the efforts of all cottage managers and social workers who participated in this practicum. Although their activities were a normal part of their assigned duties, the cooperative and diligent manner in which they responded to "new" procedures should not go unnoted.

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ABSTRACT

Improving the Performance of Social Workers During Multi-Disciplinary Team Case Reviews of Delinquent Adolescents. Carbone, Vincent J., 1990: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood. Descriptors: Performance Feedback/Organizational Behavior Management/Public-Posting/Performance Monitoring/Staff Training/Staff Development.

This practicum was implemented to improve the rehabilitation planning skills of social workers in a juvenile correctional facility. The goal was to increase social worker's discussion of all relevant rehabilitation planning data during multi-disciplinary team meetings (Case Review Committee). A related objective was the overall improvement of rehabilitation services.

As the Program Director of the institution, the writer requested the supervisors of the social workers to record their subordinate's performance at each Case Review Committee meeting. The supervisors (cottage managers) were requested to record the percentage of required documents brought to the meetings by the social workers and the percentage of documents discussed. The cottage managers provided verbal feedback immediately following each social worker presentation. In addition, the weekly results were publicly posted in the Program Department office on a graph representing individual performance.

The results of the practicum indicated a substantial improvement in social worker performance. All social workers demonstrated improvement in the number of required documents brought to the meeting and their discussion of each. Anecdotal reports by other staff and independent evaluators corroborated the improved rehabilitation planning services.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The setting was a secure juvenile correctional facility serving approximately 150 seriously delinquent males. The institution is spread over approximatley 40 acres of land in a rural community of approximately 15,000 residents. The physical security for the facility is provided by a 15 foot cyclone fence surrounding the perimeter of the grounds. The integrity of the fence line is monitored through an electronic "perim-alert" warning system which sounds an alarm whenever the fence is moved. Within the confines of the fence perimeter youngsters move under supervision with few constraints and without the need for locked doors within buildings. All movement into and out of the compound is monitored 24 hours per day and only occurs by permission of the gate operators

There are approximately 25 buildings on the grounds of the

facility. The functions of these buildings generally fall into one of three categories; educational, residential or administrative office space. The residential buildings are cottages housing 20 youngsters each. Within these buildings there is a dormitory, shower room and recreation room. There are nine cottages within the fence perimeter and two honor work-related cottages outside the fence. One cottage within the fence is a disciplinary cottage serving the extremely aggressive youngsters for a brief time out.

The approximately 150 youngsters residing at the facility ranged in age from 13 to 18 years of age. Their county of residences' were all within the southern one-half of the state where the facility is located. A similar program serves the northern half of the state. All youths are court ordered to the facility following a judicial hearing. They are sent to the institution to receive educational and rehabilitative services after a long history of adjudicated serious criminal offenses. Offenses range from numerous felonious property crimes to murder. Most youngsters remain at the facility for about seven months and then return to their home communities and usually rejoin one or both of their parents. During the first six months of their return to the

community they remain under the supervision of the institution's aftercare program.

At the institution, services converge on the youngster from three major departments; Program, Education and Professional Services. Program is the largest department and is responsible for the day-to-day supervision of the youngsters and oversight of all rehabilitation services provided by other departments. The Education department is organized as a school and therefore is responsible for providing all school-like learning experiences from initial assessment to exit evaluations. Professional services helps to coordinate and provide for counseling and psychological services for all youngsters based upon identified needs. In addition, this department is responsible for the aftercare services. All three major departments must coordinate efforts if rehabilitation of youngsters is to be the outcome of the services. The most visible manifestation of the convergence of all three department's efforts is represented during the weekly Case Review Committee (CRC) meetings. At this meeting the representative from each department presents data regarding the evaluation or progress of an individual youngster. Almost all important decisions re: case management are

made at the CRC.

Writer's Setting and Role

The writer acts as the Program Director and is therefore ultimately responsible for the supervision of all youngsters and for the planning and coordination of all rehabilitation and educational services. The Program Director's duties are "brokered" through three assistants who serve as program managers and who directly supervise the activities of the individual cottage managers.

Within the program department the key staff are the direct care counselors, the cottage social workers and the cottage managers. The cottage managers are responsible for the supervision of all rehabilitation services and case management of each youngster. The social workers act as the "broker" of services among departments, case managers and the direct care provider of counseling services under the supervision of a cottage manager. The counselors are responsible for the daily supervision of the youngsters during all activities.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

An important process in the rehabilitative programming of every youngster at the institution was the review of his case at a Case Review Committee (CRC) meeting. This committee served as a multi-disciplinary group charged with the responsibility of initially reviewing all rehabilitation planning information, ratifying all rehabilitation goals and plans and then periodically monitoring youth progress towards successful completion of the plan. This process was mandated not only by established policy but within this setting, CRC was a requirement of a Federal Court Order under which the facility currently operates. As a result, a successful CRC process would not only lead to effective programming but also compliance with the Federal Order.

To insure apppropriate rehabilitation planning by all three major

departments of the institution and to insure multi-disciplinary case review, a Case Review Committee directive was developed and published as a facility operating procedure. This policy described the purpose of the committee and the required activities of the members of the committee. Appendix A is a description of the social worker procedures distilled from the facility operating procedure. To prepare for each meeting, committee representatives were required to compile their required data or information and develop a presentation to the team. At the CRC meeting, the representative was required to bring the source documentation as described in the policy and was required to speak descriptively and evaluatively about the information.

The Program Department was represented at the meetings by the social worker of the cottage in which the youth to be reviewed resided. This person had access to essential information necessary for the development of meaningful rehabilitation goals and for evaluating progress on the goals over the course of the youth's stay at the institution. Consequently, the extent to which the social worker's performance complied with the mandates of the policy may well determine the effectiveness of the rehabilitation programming

for each youngster.

Previously, the social workers' performance was not acceptable during CRC meetings. In general, the social workers did not have with them the source data required by policy nor did they present these important data to the committee. As a result of their unacceptable performance, a complete analysis of a youngster's behavior or progress was not available to all committee members. Decisions were then made from the disadvantage of an incomplete analysis. Moreover, the decision making of all departments was adversely affected by the performance problems of the social workers. Since this was a newly formed committee, solutions to this problem had not been previously sought.

Precisely described, the problem was that the social workers, as the Program Department representatives at the Case Review Committee, did not bring to the meeting the important case planning data and therefore did not discuss the required behavioral information necessary for successful multi-disciplinary team rehabilitation programming.

Problem Documentation

As the Program Director, the writer was responsible for insuring staff compliance with institutional policy and procedure. Consequently, one of the Program Director's supervisory duties was to observe the program staff's performance during the Case Review Committee meetings. Casual observation and discussion with other Directors led to the conclusion that the program staff were not complying with the requirements of the policy. To check the reliability of these informal observations, a CRC Monitoring Checklist (Appendix B) was developed. It outlines and lists performance requirements set down in the directive. Using this checklist, systematic observations of the performance of social workers during three sessions of CRC presentations were completed. During these three days 15 social workers were observed during CRC meetings. Figure 1. represents a graphic description of the problem. On the average, social workers complied with about 50 percent of the requirements to bring the appropriate documents and discuss each. These findings were consistent with the more informal and "soft" analysis and anecdotal reports provided earlier. These

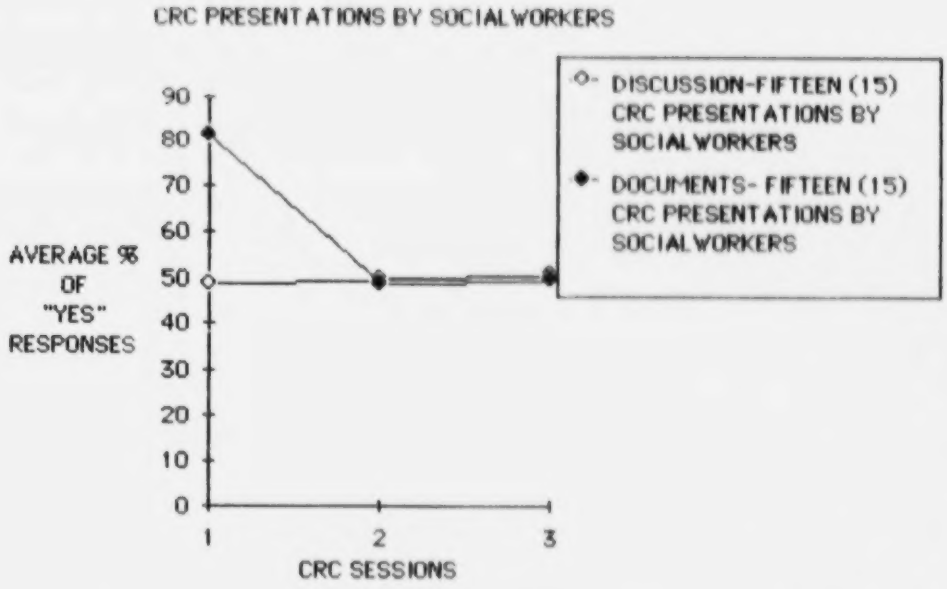

CRC PRESENTATIONS BY SOCIALWORKERS
DISCUSSION-FIFTEEN (15) CRC PRESENTATIONS BY SOCIALWORKERS
DOCUMENTS- FIFTEEN (15) CRC PRESENTATIONS BY SOCIALWORKERS
AVERAGE % OF "YES" RESPONSES
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
1
2
3
CRC SESSIONS

Figure 1.

findings presented a significant hinderance to rehabilitation programming.

Causative Analysis

There were many possible causative factors which may have contributed to this problem. The following perspective was used to analyze the variables which might account for this problem:

1. Was the problem related to a lack of didactic training for the social workers?
2. Was the problem related to a lack of capacity of the social workers?
3. Was the problem related to the poor arrangement of work environment/manangement factors necessary to insure the required performance?

It was concluded that number three (3) above was the most cogent analysis of the CRC problem. This conclusion was reached only after having reviewed numbers one (1) and two (2) and found that they were implausible. Experience indicated that didactic training rarely "fixes" performance problems. Moreover, the social workers had

already received classroom type training covering the requirements of the CRC directive. Therefore, it seemed unlikely that merely providing a further description of duties would improve performance. Secondly, it was clear that the social workers had the capacity to perform the duties required at CRC meetings. They all had earned at least a Bachelors Degree and had demonstrated an ability to carry out far more complex tasks. Given the fact that there existed a performance problem within a group of staff who had been given instructions and who had the ability to carry out the instructions, one must conclude that this was a peformance engineering problem. As with most performance engineering problems, one must look to the work environment to identify the factors which support poor performance. In the present situation the direct supervisors of the social workers had not arranged a set of environmental circumstances which would support the desired performance. The social workers had not been told precisely what they must bring to the meeting and what they must discuss at each meeting. While these requirements were imbedded in the lengthy CRC policy it was easy to imagine how they could be over-looked if they were not extracted from the policy and highlighted. Secondly, it

was clear to the social workers that their supervisors were not observing their performance during the CRC meetings. Consequently, social workers were not provided with feedback on their performance following the meetings and therefore had no basis upon which to either change their performance or continue performing in the same acceptable manner. Finally, without observations there was no opportunity for the supervisors of the social workers to provide either social approval or disapproval as a motivational technique.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

During the last 15 years, hundreds of studies have been published in management and psychology journals demonstrating the application of behavior modification principles to problems of job related performance. The problems have ranged from productivity to absenteeism and have even included the reduction of work site hazards (McRae & Lutzker, 1982).

There are numerous examples in the literature of problems of gaining the compliance of institutional staff with rehabilitation

related policy requirements. Moreover, in each of the studies cited the researchers concluded that a performance engineering problem similar to the one presented in the causative analysis above in fact existed. Specifically, they found that the problems were caused by a lack of specified performance requirements, lack of performance feedback and limited supervisory approval for required performance.

Komaki, Collins and Penn (1982) explain that an analysis of the functional relationship between behavior and its consequences, which is the foundation of behavior modification programs, is the most useful paradigm for analyzing performance problems. These authors suggest that the two distinguishing characterisitics of this type of research include: (a) behavioral measurement of performance and (b) the provision of consequences contingent upon performance. One of the earliest (1973) performance problems identified using this paradigm was accomplished by the management of Emery Air Freight (McRae and Lutzker, 1982) A performance problem related to packaging was identified and overcome resulting in an annual savings of more than one-half million dollars. Around the same time Luthans and Kreitner (1975) were experimenting in similar ways and coined the phrase "Organizational Behavior Modification " to refer to

the application of behavioral principles to organizational problems.

Despite the burgeoning success in the field of business and industry few researchers were experimenting with performance problems in the field of Human Services. Krapfl (1981) chided human service practictioners for not keeping pace with the technological advances which were occurring in the business industry. Notwithstanding Krapfl's criticisms, several researchers have successfully applied behavioral principles to organizational problems in Human Service agencies. Building on what had been successful in other fields and relying on the distinguishing methods of behavior modification many different types of performance problems have been addressed in recent years.

In what is now considered pioneer research in Organizational Behavior Modification Panyan, Boozer and Morris (1970) overcame the problems related to the following of treatment regimens in a state institution for the mentally retarded. Instructions and training alone had had little effect on improving the staff performance. The addition of feedback for desired performance led to substantial performance improvements. Pommer & Streedbeck (1974) also found that publicly posted performance feedback had a

substantial effect on performance as compared to merely providing clear descriptions of behavior. These researchers concluded that the improved performance of the houseparents in the children's center was attributed to the clear communication, posted feedback and the monetary reward for desired performance. Using a multiple baseline design Quilitch (1975), was able to demonstrate the contribution that antecedent control vs. antecendent control plus feedback has on the performance of mental health technicians. When publicly posted feedback re: the number of mentally retarded clients who were involved in recreation activities was added to the antecendent variables of a memo and training, there was a dramatic increase in participation by the clients. It was clear that the technicians made considerably stronger efforts to increase client participation when the number of particpants was posted for all staff to review.

It was several years after the Panyan et al. (1970) study that Greene, Willis, Levy and Bailey (1978) demonstrated the relationship between improving staff performance using behavioral principles and concommitant client gains. These researchers found that mentally retarded clients who received training from attendant staff who received workshop training, immediate performance

feedback including praise and publicly posted feedback, demonstrated the greatest improvements. Adding to the body of literature in support of Organizational Behavior Modification methodology, Kreitner, Reif and Morris (1977) established the effectiveness of providing publicly posted feedback to mental health technicians for their performance in conducting group and individual therapy sessions. In a study of particular relevance, Hutchinson, Jarman and Bailey (1980) found marked improvement in the performance of professional staff during habilitation team meetings when dimensions of their behavior were measured and publicly posted. Improved punctuality, attendance and movement through agenda items were all noted to result.

The effect of implementation of behavioral principles to human service agency staff problems is not limited to state institutions for the mentally retarded. There is a more recent and substantial body of literature within the fields of education and psychiatric care which support this methodology. Educators have increased students' use of hearing aids (Hundert, McMahon and Kitcher, 1982), improved rates of teacher praise, (Gross &Ekstrand, 1983) and have increased teacher supervision (Whyte, Van Houten and Hunter, 1983)

by providing consequences for these behaviors in the form of verbal feedback with praise and public posting of performance. Moreover, the performance of school psychologists has come under the control of supervisor feedback and improvements in program planning has been demonstrated (Maher, 1982). Mental health practictioners have shown that a clinician's delivery of services to psychiatric patients could be improved using feebdback as a consequence for performance (Delamater, Connors and Wells, 1984; Calpin, Eldelstein and Redmon, 1988).

With its methodological roots in the field of applied behavior analysis and from its beginnings in the business and industry workplace, Organizational Behavior Modification has provided Human Service agencies with powerful tools for improving staff performance. A wide and varied array of staff problems have been eliminated through the application of this technology. A thorough review of this literature finds that when managers clearly specify performance standards, and then provide verbal feedback which includes contingent praise along with public posting of performance dimensions, improved performance is likely to occur.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The goal of this practicum was to enhance the rehabilitation planning and programming for institutionalized delinquent youngsters at the facility where this practicum was being conducted. This practicum therefore attempted to improve the performance of key program staff at the Case Review Committee (CRC) where important rehabilitation decisions were made.

Behavioral Objective

While the goal above had set the general direction for the practicum the observable and measurable objective below describes precisely how staff performance would change if the practicum was successful.

OBJECTIVE: Each week all social workers at the CRC meetings will bring required case management documents and will discuss each. They will be required to meet a 100 percent correct response criterion for documentation and discussion as measured by the recording of a "yes" for each requirement on the CRC Monitoring Checklist during observations at the CRC meetings.

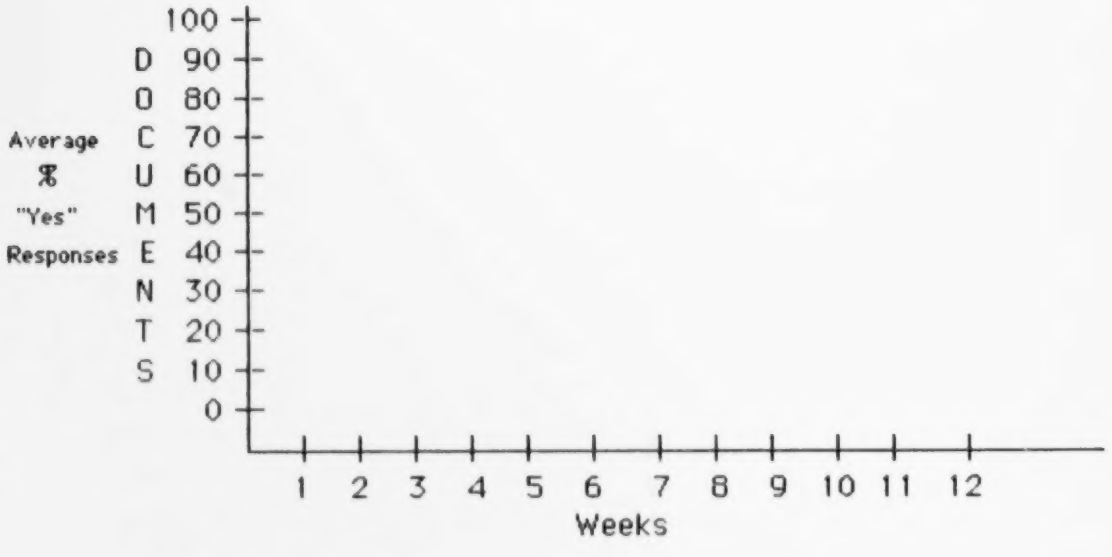
Although the outcome of this practicum was judged by success in meeting the above objective, it was important to observe a corollary effect of this work. It was useful to know the relationship between social workers who receive high ratings on the CRC Monitoring Checklist and the rehabilitation progress of his/her youngsters. It was assumed that by meeting the performance requirements of the CRC directive youngsters would receive better rehabilitative services. During the course of this practicum anecdotal records were kept to record any corollary effects of the work.

Measurement of Objectives

The CRC Monitoring Checklist (Appendix B) was used to measure the performance of the social workers. The Checklist was completed during each CRC by the cottage manager who supervises the social worker. The managers positioned themselves at the table to insure that he/she could observe the performance adequately and checked off either "yes" or "no" under each requirement as they occurred. A separate form was used for each youngster's case presentation. Immediately following the observation during the two minute break between case presentations the manager calculated the percentage of "yes" received for the category of documents and discussion and placed the figures in the upper right had corner of the form.

The data were summarized as a weekly average percentage for each social worker. The data were graphed for each social worker individually as a percentage of "yes" responses for each measure along the Y axis and meetings along the X axis. There were two graphs, documentation and discussion, for each social worker each week. Figure 2. provides an example of this graph. By

Social Worker _____



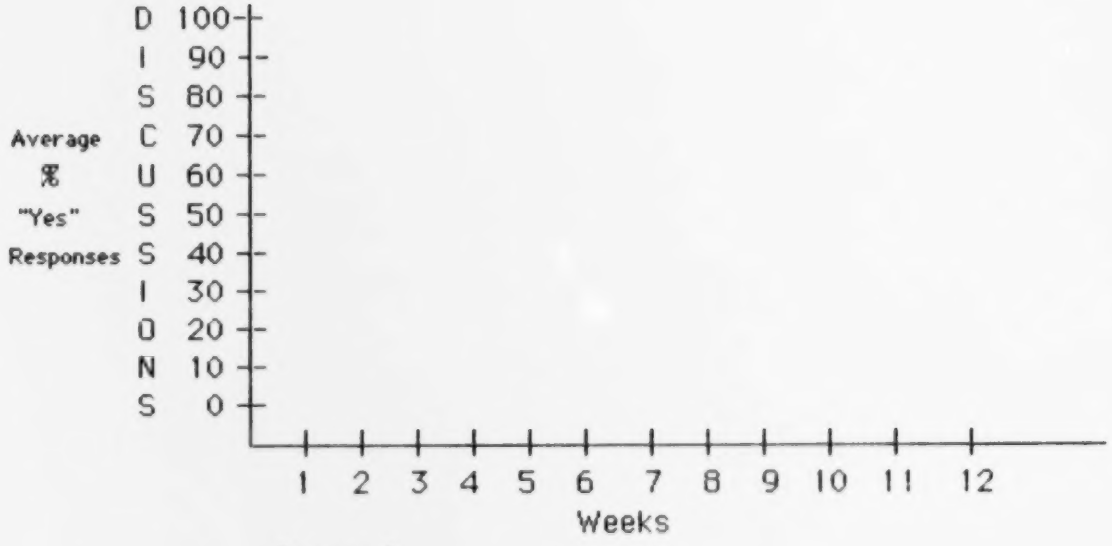


Figure 2.

presenting the data in this manner the analysis was accomplished by visual inspection of the graph. The frequency of percentages which reached 100 was obvious upon visual inspection of the charts and therefore provided a simple and easy method of evaluating the success of the practicum.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The literature investigating methods for enhancing staff performance in institutional settings was reviewed for suggested solution strategies. More specifically, it was felt that it was appropriate to review research which dealt with institutional staff performance problems directly related to treatment or rehabilitation efforts and not merely personnel related problems such as absenteeism or tardiness.

Almost twenty years ago Panyan, Boozer and Morris, (1970), experimented with the effects of specifying duties (antecedent stimulus control) and then providing feedback in the form of public posting. Attendant staff in a state institution for mentally retarded persons received instruction and then verbal and publicly posted feedback on their performance of behavior modification tasks.

Substantial improvements in the staff performance was noted as a result of the methods used. Kreitner, Reif and Morris (1977) obtained similar results using feedback as a consequence of performance by mental health technicians. In a study with strong relevance to this practicum, Hutchinson, Jarman and Bailey (1980) found that the performance of professional staff as part of a rehabilitation team could be improved through publicly posted feedback of individual performance following each meeting. Greene, Willis, Levy and Bailey (1978) demonstrated that the services delivered to mentally retarded persons could be improved by providing instruction, immediate feedback involving social approval and public posting of the performance of direct care workers. The most important finding of this study is the direct relationship between immediate feedback and public posting and client improvements. Pommer & Streedbeck (1974) found that publicly posting job duties and rewarding completion of those duties greatly improved the performance of houseparents in a residential children's center. Their findings support the use of clear communication of duties (antecedent control) and the beneficial impact of consequences in the form of feedback and rewards. Quiltich (1975)

studied the effects of three management procedures on the performance of recreational staff in an institution for retarded persons. He found that antecedent control in the form of memos and workshop training was ineffective if it was not paired with the effects of performance consequences in the form of publicly posted feedback.

Description of Selected Solution

It was clear after reviewing the literature and analyzing other possible solutions that the strategies for improving the CRC meetings should include: (a) a clear description of social worker performance requirements for the CRC meetings, (b) verbal feedback to social workers which includes social approval immediately following the CRC meeting, (c) weekly public posting of individual social worker average percentages of "yes" responses for documentation and discussion requirements as outlined on the CRC Monitoring Checklist.

Report of Action Taken

The following is a description of the implementation of the specific solution strategy procedures :

1. The cottage managers and social workers were provided with an easy to understand and well written description of the CRC directive performance requirements (Appendix A). In addition, both groups were given copies of the CRC Monitoring Checklist (Appendix B). These documents were provided at a meeting during the first week of implementation. The purpose of the meeting was to thoroughly discuss the procedures and the materials distributed. This meeting and the materials served as the antecedent stimulus control procedures for the practicum.

2. The cottage managers received instructions to attend each CRC meeting and to provide feedback to the social worker using the scored CRC Monitoring Checklist immediately following his/her presentation to the CRC committee. The managers were instructed to inform the social worker of his/her percentage of "yes" scores and to point out how he/she could increase the percentage. The manager was instructed to praise the social worker for the "yes"

scores that were obtained. These procedures served as the immediate verbal feedback and social approval procedures of the practicum.

3. The managers handed in the average percent score for their social worker for that week on both performance criteria recorded on the CRC Monitoring Checklist by 5:00 P.M. on Thursday each week. The score for each social worker was placed on the individual chart (Figure 2.) and the chart was posted in an obvious place in the Program Department Office. A recent consolidation and centralization of the Program Department Offices suggested that the posting of the performance charts in the now centralized office would insure greater visibility and attention. This was true to the extent that the originally planned Friday morning meeting designed to draw attention to the posted charts became superfluous and therefore was abandoned. The highly visible display of the charts in a "high traffic zone" in the Program Office served as the public posting component employed in this practicum.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The objective of this practicum was to improve social workers' performance during CRC or multi-disciplinary treatment planning meetings for institutionalized delinquent boys. Two dimensions of social worker performance were chosen to measure improvement: (a) having available all required documentation at the meetings and (b) discussion of each document's contribution to the rehabilitation planning for the youth. Prior to implementation of the solution strategies social workers were performing inadequately along these two dimensions.

The results of this practicum are summarized and graphically presented in Figure 3.. The data represented in this figure were obtained according to the procedures outlined earlier in this paper. Note that the Legend in Figure 3. identifies the symbols representing

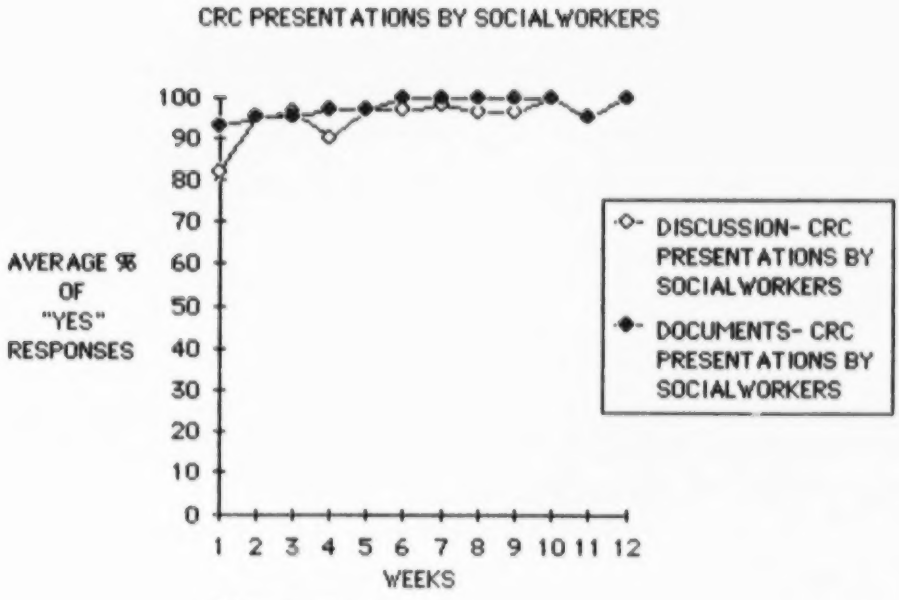

CRC PRESENTATIONS BY SOCIALWORKERS
AVERAGE % OF "YES" RESPONSES
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
WEEKS
DISCUSSION- CRC PRESENTATIONS BY SOCIALWORKERS
DOCUMENTS- CRC PRESENTATIONS BY SOCIALWORKERS

Figure 3.

both DOCUMENTATION and DISCUSSION requirements. Each data point in the figure represents the average percentage of "Yes" responses as recorded by cottage managers during CRC meetings each week over a twelve week period. These data were obtained from CRC presentations by eight social workers and represent approximately 150 individual CRC presentations. As a result of the CRC meeting schedule for youths all eight social workers were not required to make presentations during every week of this practicum and consequently are not represented in each week's data. Given the duration of this practicum, presentations by all social workers are evenly distributed across all weeks and therefore the data are not unequally weighted by the performance of any one social worker. Moreover, the decision to represent the data in aggregated form as opposed to "by individual social workers" resulted from the need to balance (a) economy of space with (b) appropriate interpretation of the results. As one might conclude from an inspection of Figure 3. the range of differences among social workers was quite small each week. Therefore, important "within" group differences were not lost. In addition, no one social worker was consistently rated lower than all others, a significant "between" group finding which also

might have been obscured by aggregated data. As a result of this logic, economy of space considerations prevailed and only aggregated data are presented.

Figure 3. clearly shows an immediate improvement in performance of social workers at CRC meetings when compared to Figure 1. performance data. One will note that the average percentage of "Yes" responses for DOCUMENTS never fell below 90 percent during the implementation phase of the practicum. The figure shows similar results for the DISCUSSION measurement with the exception of the first week of implementation of the solution strategy. During six of the 12 weeks of the study the social workers met the objective of this practicum for the DOCUMENTS measure by achieving 100 percent of the possible "Yes" responses. In terms of DISCUSSION, Figure 3. shows that only during the last week of the practicum was the 100 percent "Yes" responses objective met. The practical significance of not having fully met the objective of this practicum will be discussed below. Given the limited range of average percentage differences across weeks substantial trends are difficult to identify. Nothwithstanding this issue, it does appear that social worker performance in both measured areas improved

immediately and steadily over the duration of this practicum.

Conclusion

The results of this practicum indicate that following the application of the solution strategies e.g. clear instructions, performance feedback and public posting, social worker performance at CRC meetings improved over previously measured levels. While no causal relationships can be drawn, it appears that the solution strategies used may well have contributed to the improved performance. Although the objective of this practicum was not fully met as measured by the 100 percent performance criterion, the results indicate a close approximation to this level of performance. Moreover, it appears that the practical significance between meeting the objective and the attained level may well be so small as to render the differences unimportant. This contention is predicated on the assumption that effective rehabilitation planning may not be unduly hampered by the unavailability of one or two bits of data. In fact, one might more easily argue that individual case differences might provide compelling reasons not to discuss one or two of the

required documents.

The results of this practicum are consistent with the research findings which supported the solution strategies employed. In general, the suggestions of Komaki, Collins and Penn (1982) regarding the analysis of performance problems proved useful. More specifically, this practicum operationalized the principles suggested by Komaki et al. (1982) and employed similar methods used by Hutchinson et al. (1980) with similar findings. While Hutchinson et al. (1980) measured different dimensions of rehabilitation planning the results of this practicum are consistent with their findings. This practicum supports their findings which suggest that rehabilitation planning by professionals can be improved by providing verbal feedback and public posting of performance.

Recommendation

An unanticpated but nevertheless interesting finding is the uneven improvement in social worker performance between the DOCUMENTS measure and the DISCUSSION measure as shown in Figure

3.. Note that ratings of DISCUSSION are consistently lower than ratings of DOCUMENTATION and also account for the lowest data point on the figure. This difference is important because discussion of rehabilitation issues during CRC meetings by social workers is a necessary condition for effective rehabilitation planning to occur. In and of themselves these data might not suggest an area of concern, e.g. practical significance issues discussed above. However, anecdotal data gathered during this practicum also suggests that the quality and usefulness of what is discussed during CRC meetings needs to be improved. Consequently, this writer will be recommending the following steps as a follow-up to this practicum:

1. specify the "content" of what should be said at CRC meetings to improve the quality of rehabilitation planning

2. use the same performance engineering methods to improve issues of quality.

Other problem-solvers who may be interested in replicating this practicum should be aware of these findings. This writer suggests that the criteria for a "yes" evaluation should include dimensions of quality and not limited to first occurrence.

Future problem-solvers should also be aware of the initial

resistance of staff to the public posting of work related performance. This writer found that directly recognizing and "comforting" staff initially allayed their concerns. Finally, this writer found many supervisors were ill-prepared to provide clear and descriptive performance feedback to subordinate staff. Therefore, it is recommended that future problem-solvers provide initial instruction in this area to supervisors before implementation

Although the findings of this practicum support improved rehabilitation planning, it is impossible, over a three month period, to assess the degree to which this improved planning translates into improved rehabilitation services. In addition, better planning does not always mean implementation of what has been prescribed. Consequently, any corollary improvements related to actual services can not be identified. Future problem-solvers should be cautioned not to expect immediate changes in the actual delivery of rehabilitation services commensurate with the improved case planning.

One corollary effect that can be noted relates to federal monitoring of the agency by the courts. A Federal Monitor recently wrote in a report to the court after attending a CRC meeting which

occurred in the middle of this practicum: "I observed the formal reviews of several youth and noted significant improvements . . . These are exactly what formal progress reviews call for." Much effort by many staff across several departments contributed to this comment. However, the significance of the social worker role during CRC meetings suggests appropriate weight be given to their improved performance as a contributory factor in the Federal Monitor's comment.

Dissemination

This writer has investigated the following plans for disseminating this practicum:

1. presentation at one or more national conferences which focus on the needs of staff and youth within the juvenile justice system
2. submission to a juvenile justice journal which publishes practitioner-oriented work and is therefore less concerned about methodological rigor
3. distribution of copies of this report to other facilities within the "parent" organization of the author with an offer to provide

consultation regarding the methods employed in this practicum.

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APPENDIX A

CASE REVIEW COMMITTEE PROCEDURES
FOR
SOCIAL WORKERS

CASE REVIEW COMMITTEE PROCEDURES FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

The case review committee is the meeting during which Treatment Plans are developed (15 day classification), agreed upon (30 day CR) and evaluated and modified (all subsequent CRCs). The following is a description of the responsibilities of program staff at each meeting.

CLASSIFICATION (15 DAY CRC)

1. Washington Cottage staff provide the following:

   A. Social History
   B. Results of Direct Observation Scale and observation of relevant behavior e.g., Progress Notes, Social Worker Weekly Reports, Daily Performance Sheets, Behavior Charts, Behavior Management Reports, Education Reports.
   C. Intake Summary Completed at Meeting.

2. Receiving Cottage staff provide the following:

   A. Results of Direct Observation Scale.
   B. Discussion of adjustment to group living at the cottage.
   C. Complete Performance Contract at Meeting.

30 DAY CRC

Cottage Staff should bring the following documentation to the meeting:

1. Program Portion of Treatment Plan.
2. Social Worker Case Notes.
3. Daily Performance Sheets.
4. Behavior Management Reports and point earnings.
5. Disciplinary Reports.
6. Education Reports.
7. Special Needs (if appropriate).

During this meeting the committee will discuss the plans developed by each of the departments. The committee opinion as described by the Chairperson will either ratify the plan or modify it.

During this meeting the cottage staff should discuss each point below:

1. State the behavior of this youngster as described in the present level of functioning. Use these sources of information.

   - Social Worker notes-special needs and counseling
   - counselor input
   - direct observation scale information
   - behavior management point earnings
   - education reports (daily report card)
   - contacts with family and friends

2. Discuss residential goals in terms of benefit to youth beyond this setting. In other words, how does achieving this goal help this youngster to stay out of trouble in the community?

3. Discuss how this residential goal provides coordination between Education, Vocation, Re-Entry and Special Needs. For example, "The Re-Entry plan is to return this youth to the same home and neighborhood where he was involved in drug abuse. We must work on a goal of making this youngster less vulnerable to the influences of drug-abusing friends in his surroundings." Then describe the goal in objective form.

4. Ask the youth his opinion of this goal and how long it will take to achieve this goal. Make sure he realizes that the quicker he completes his goal, the quicker he will return to his community.

ALL SUBSEQUENT CRCs

Bring all of the above information and discuss the same issues. But in addition, discuss the following:

1. Progress on goals as documented.
2. What is working and what is not. If your methods aren't working to help the youth achieve the goal, suggest changes or request suggestions from others at the meeting.

APPENDIX B

CASE REVIEW COMMITTEE MONITORING CHECKLIST

Percent Scores: **Documents** _____
Discussions _____

Cottage Manager _____ **Date** _____

Social Worker _____ **Cottage** _____

Youth _____

C R C Monitoring Checklist

CLASSIFICATION (15 DAY CR)

1. Did the receiving cottage representative bring and discuss the following:

	Document		Discussion	
A. Results of Direct Observation	Yes	No	Yes	No
B. Cottage Adjustment Information	Yes	No	Yes	No
C. Appropriate page of the Treatment Plan is distributed	Yes	No	Yes	No
D. Performance Contract is completed	Yes	No	Yes	No

Cottage Manager _____ **Date** _____

Social Worker _____ **Cottage** _____

Youth _____

30 DAY C R C

	Document		Discussion	
A.	Complete Treatment Plan			
	Yes	No	N/A	
B.	Social Worker Case Notes			
	Yes	No	Yes	No
C.	Daily Performance Sheets			
	Yes	No	Yes	No
D.	Behavior Management Reports			
	Yes	No	Yes	No
E.	Disciplinary Reports			
	Yes	No	Yes	No
F.	Education Reports			
	Yes	No	Yes	No

G. Special Needs

Yes No Yes No

ALL SUBSEQUENT C R Cs

H. Progress on goals

Yes No Yes No

I. What is working and what is not

Yes No Yes No

Did the cottage representative discuss the following:

1. Benefits of goals beyond this setting

Yes No Yes No

2. How goal provides continuity among services

Yes No Yes No

3. Youth asked to comment and has been told about relationship between time and behavior

Yes No Yes No